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LETTER DATED 16 JULY 1997 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 14 July 1997 addressed to Your Excellency by His Excellency Mr. İsmail Cem, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tuluy TANÇ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

97-19773 (E) 160797

Annex

Letter dated 14 July 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letters dated 11 December 1996 and 8 and 21 January, 12 and 25 February, 15 April, 6, 15, 18, 21, 25, 26 and 31 May and 3 and 12 June 1997 signed by the Foreign Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister or the Acting Foreign Minister of the Republic of Iraq addressed to Your Excellency and circulated as Security Council documents S/1996/1033, S/1996/1041, S/1997/24, S/1997/72, S/1997/129, S/1997/158, S/1997/318, S/1997/354, S/1997/376, S/1997/379, S/1997/391, S/1997/393, S/1997/399, S/1997/420, S/1997/436 and S/1997/461 respectively, I should like to bring to your attention the following:

The principles and objectives of Turkish foreign policy towards Iraq have been consistent and fully in line with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council from the outset of the Gulf crisis.

This policy is based, first and foremost, on respect for the independence, sovereignty, political unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. In view of the circumstances prevailing in northern Iraq, Turkey has also tried to contribute, to the maximum extent possible, to peace, stability and security in that area. This has been essential not only for Turkey's own security interests but also for the well-being of the inhabitants of northern Iraq.

The Government of Turkey fails to understand, therefore, the motives which may have guided the Government of Iraq to make the unfounded allegations contained in the above-mentioned letters. Turkey not only has made public the objectives and the limited scope and duration of its recent operation in northern Iraq, but also has informed Iraq in time, through diplomatic channels, in order to avoid any misunderstanding. Indeed, the units of the Turkish armed forces which have conducted the operation, with the cooperation of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), have begun withdrawing from Iraq as of 20 June 1997.

The situation in northern Iraq has provided the PKK, a terrorist organization, with the opportunity to establish a presence in the area, in violation of Iraq's territorial integrity, and to conduct from there raids into Turkish territory. These raids have resulted in loss of life and property. The PKK presence in the area has also constituted a major security threat to the local population by undermining peace and stability. This is acknowledged by regional groups, the KDP in particular, which suffers the most from PKK activities in northern Iraq.

Defending the sanctity of its borders as well as the safety of its people is a priority for Turkey like any other State, and the Government of Turkey is determined to take all appropriate measures with a view to safeguarding its legitimate security interests and protecting its people against terrorism. The elimination of terrorists from northern Iraq will also constitute a major contribution to peace and stability in the region and remove the need for further operations.

I should like to take this opportunity to point out that certain countries' support of terrorism and the PKK in particular continues to undermine regional peace and stability and cannot but be condemned. I am confident that the Government of Iraq as well as other Members of the United Nations will take full account of this when assessing the causes of tension in the region.

Turkey has always supported the reintegration of Iraq with the international community through the full implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions. This continues to be our policy.

While acting in line with the international community, abiding by the United Nations sanctions regime and meticulously fulfilling its responsibilities emanating from United Nations resolutions on Iraq at great cost, the Government of Turkey has supported the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) and will similarly support resolution 1111 (1997) to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Iraq. Turkey has taken all measures to ensure that the flow of humanitarian goods to Iraq was not adversely affected by the recent military operation. This has been acknowledged by United Nations officials.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) İsmail CEM
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Turkey